19th CENTURY RAILROAD POSTAL MARKINGS RELATED TO STEUBEN, SCHUYLER, CHEMUNG AND TIOGA COUNTIES, NY

SYNOPSIS

The four New York counties of Steuben, Schuyler, Chemung and Tioga comprise a large portion of what is known as New York's "Southern Tier," i.e.. the area adjacent to Pennsylvania's northern boundary. The southern boundary line of Steuben, Chemung and Tioga Counties is, in fact, the Pennsylvania line. Schuyler County was formed primarily out of Steuben and Chemung Counties in 1854; Chemung County was created out of Tioga in 1836 and Steuben out of Ontario in 1796. The exhibitor collects the postal history of Steuben, Schuyler and Chemung Counties; Tioga County is included in this exhibit because of its close relationship with Chemung County in the early development of the railroads in New York State.

This exhibit does not purport to be a complete display of 19th century postal markings having some relationship to the four counties named in the title; it is a sampling only. Determining what would be a "complete display" might be impossible in any event. Generally the exhibitor has limited his railway mail collecting to those covers carried into or out of Steuben, Schuyler and Chemung Counties by a railroad serving these counties, or having a railway marking (CDS or other) which includes the name of a city or town located in these counties.

In addition to Elmira (Chemung County) becoming an important railroad junction in the 19th century, at least two places in Steuben County, Hornellsville (now Hornell) and Corning, served as significant junctions. This exhibit includes examples of railway markings wherein each of these locations is named a terminus in the mail run. Both Elmira and Hornellsville had sufficient traffic to require the use of a local mail agent.

The exhibit is in approximate chronological order, from the early 1850s to the late 1890s. As might be expected, the scarcer markings are found at the beginning of the exhibit, especially pages 2 through 5. These are covers from the so-called Classic Period of railway mail markings, i.e., 1837 to 1861. Other hard-to-find markings (at least in readable condition) are *Easton & Elm(ira)*, page 6, and *Roch. & Corn.*, page 13.

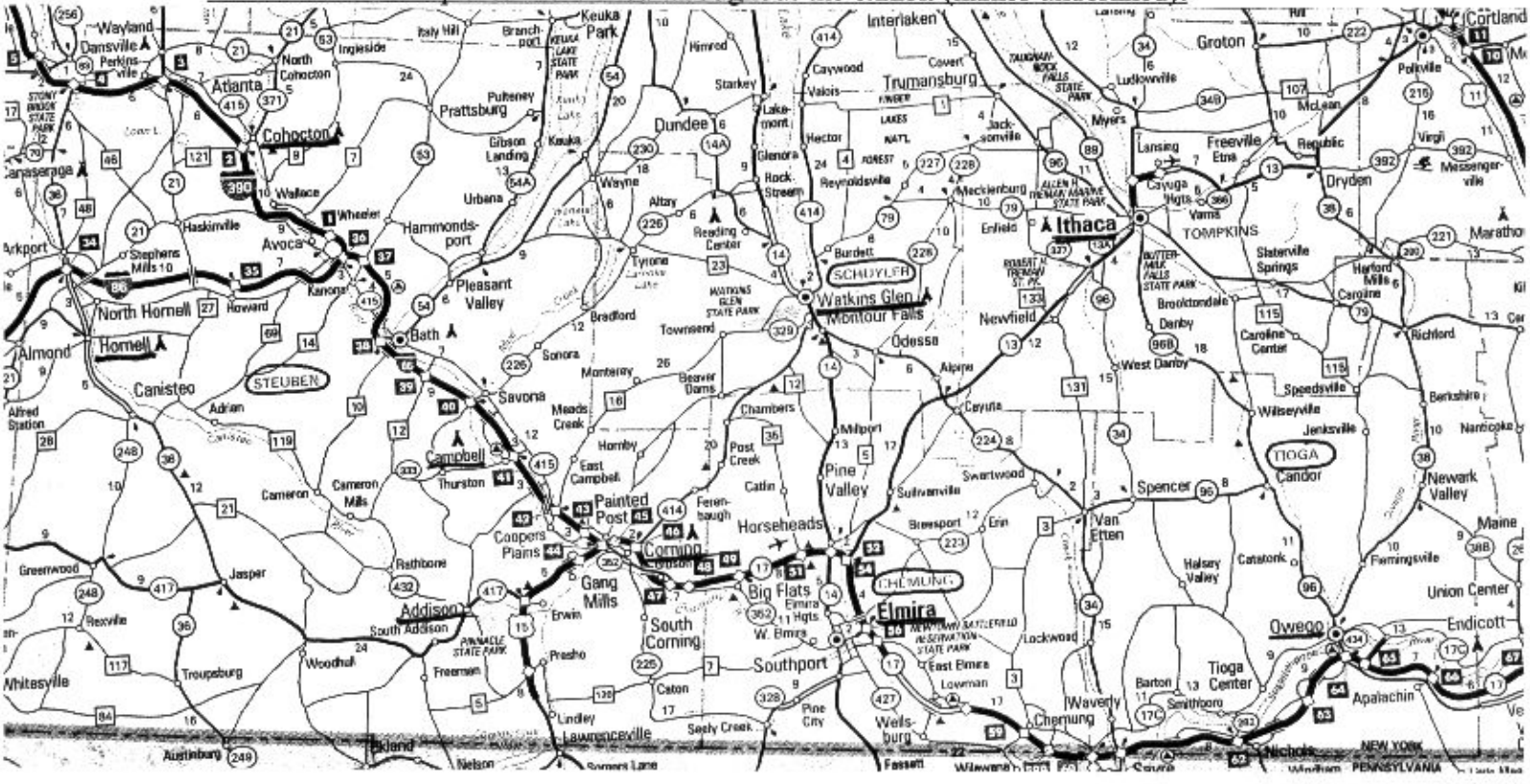
With each route agent or RPO marking there is a description identifying the railway mail route on which it was applied, the period of use and a brief history/location of the railroad on which the route was carried. For each local mail agent marking, the write-up identifies where it was used, the period of use and the number of different markings used at that location.

The railway mail markings shown in this exhibit are as follows:

Page 2—Chemung Rail Road
Page 3—New York and Erie Railroad
Page 4—Buffalo, Corning and New York Railroad
Page 5—Catawissa, Williamsport & Elmira Railroad

Page 6—Easton & Elmira division of Lehigh Valley Railroad
Page 7—Elmira and Blossburg division of Tioga, Elmira and State Line Railroad
Page 8—New York & Hornellsville and Hornellsville & Dunkirk divisions of New York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad
Page 9—Hornellsville & Buffalo division of New York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad
Page 10—Canastota & Elmira division of Utica, Ithaca & Elmira Railroad
Page 11—Local Mail Agent at Elmira
Page 12—Canandaigua & Elmira division of Northern Central Railroad
Page 13—Rochester & Corning division of New York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad
Page 14—Elmira & Hoytville division of Erie Railroad
Page 15—Lyons & Williamsport division of New York Central Railroad
Page 16—Local Mail Agent at Hornellsville

References:

United States Railroad Postmarks 1837 to 1861, C.W. Remele
Railroad Postmarks of the United States 1861 to 1886, Charles L. Towle and Henry A. Meyer
U.S. Route & Station Agent Postmarks, Charles L. Towle
U.S. Route & Station Agent Postmarks Historical Supplement, Charles L. Towle
The United States Railway Post Office Postmark Catalogue 1864 to 1977, Charles L. Towle
Directory of U.S. Route Agent Lines (Revised Edition – 2000), Mobile Post Office Society
Directory of Railway Post Offices (Revised – 1997), John L. Kay
Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers

Section of 2001 New York State road map showing subject counties (names circled) and localities within map area mentioned throughout the exhibit (names underlined):